

Madam Speaker, I rise today in opposition to H.R. 3082, a continuing resolution that would fund federal government operations on a temporary basis through March 4, 2011. Regrettably, one of the last votes of the 111th Congress has become the first vote of the Republican-controlled House of Representatives.

As a member of the House Appropriations Committee, I take seriously my annual responsibility to assess funding priorities, perform oversight, and allocate federal dollars where they are most needed and will make the greatest impact. Unfortunately, my Republican colleagues in the House and Senate are choosing to abandon this important work. They are blocking action on a fiscal year 2011 funding package that would respond to the current needs of the American people and make critical investments in our communities.

Due to Republican obstruction, the House is forced to consider this appropriations measure, which places the federal government on auto-pilot for two months. All difficult decisions are being delayed until another day. Critical federal agencies including the Federal Aviation Administration and Department of Defense are being subjected to enormous – and avoidable – uncertainty. And the uncertainty created by this short-term continuing resolution goes far beyond Washington. Every state and community across the country will be debating whether they are able to move forward with critical investments, such as the Central Corridor Light Rail in Minnesota.

This temporary appropriations measure underfunds critical priorities in every area of American life from education and agriculture, to transportation and energy. It is inexcusable to withhold necessary investments in the American economy while adding to the deficit with tax cuts for the wealthiest in our society. But that is exactly what Congress is doing this month as a result of the reckless game of brinkmanship my Republican colleagues are playing with the American people.

I yield back the remainder of my time.